

BORROWDALE AND BASSENTHWAITE

—

Summary Description

2.c.9 THE BORROWDALE AND BASSENTHWAITE VALLEY



“...distinguished from all other Lakes by being surrounded with sublimity: the fantastic mountains of Borrowdale to the south, the solitary majesty of Skiddaw to the north, the bold steps of Wallow-crag and Lodore to the east, and to the west the clustering mountains of New-lands.”

William Wordsworth, 'Guide to the Lakes' (1835)

DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The hard and resistant volcanic rocks of the high fells of the central Scafell range enclose the head of the valley before it runs due north to the expansive coastal plain of the Solway Firth. This is the largest of all the valleys and includes the major glacial lakes of Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite. The northern section of the valley is contained by the distinct, rounded, smoother textured hills of softer Skiddaw Slates, the Skiddaw and Blencathra massif to the east and Derwent Fells to the west. Further north typical limestone scenery takes over as the valley opens out and the fells are left behind.



FIGURE 2.c.9.1 A view of the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley from Catbells, looking across to the Skiddaw and Blencathra Massif. Derwent Water in the foreground.

Figure 2.c.9.2 Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley North Illustrative Map

- Agro-pastoral landscape
- Aesthetic appreciation
- Conservation
- Nominated Property boundary



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Troutbeck Roman forts | 8. Carrock Mine |
| 2. Isel Hall | 9. Mirehouse |
| 3. Routenbeck cruck barn | 10. Underscar Manor |
| 4. Brownrigg Farm | 11. Armathwaite Hall |
| 5. Blindcrake field system | 12. Bassenthwaite Lake
(owned and managed by
National Park Authority) |
| 6. Hesketh Hall | |
| 7. The Howk bobbin mill
(managed by National
Park Authority) | |



EXAMPLES OF KEY ATTRIBUTES: As shown on the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite North Valley illustrative map



NO. 1 FIGURE 2.c.9.3 Roman Fort at Troutbeck



NO. 2 FIGURE 2.c.9.4 Isel Hall



NO. 3 FIGURE 2.c.9.5 Routenbeck cruck barn



NO. 4 FIGURE 2.c.9.6 Brownrigg Farm



NO. 5 FIGURE 2.c.9.7 Blindcrake field system



NO. 6 FIGURE 2.c.9.8 Hesketh Hall



NO. 7 FIGURE 2.c.9.9 The Howk bobbin mill
(managed by National Park Authority)



NO. 8 FIGURE 2.c.9.10 Carrock Mine



NO. 9 FIGURE 2.c.9.11 Mirehouse



NO. 10 FIGURE 2.c.9.12 Underscar Manor



NO. 11 FIGURE 2.c.9.13 Armathwaite Hall

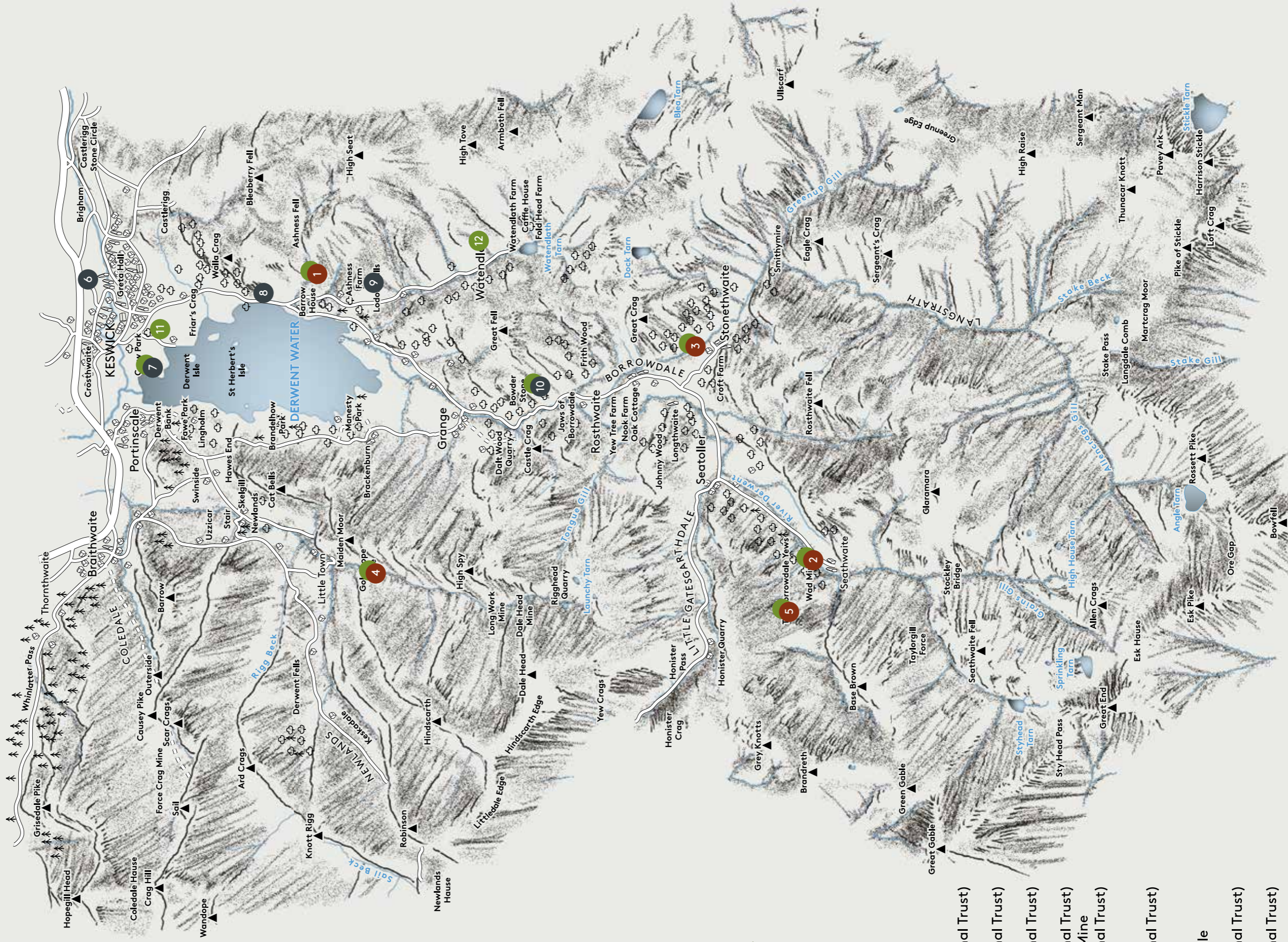


NO. 12 FIGURE 2.c.9.14 Bassenthwaite Lake
(owned and managed by National Park Authority)



Figure 2.c.9.15 Borrowdale and Basenthwaite Valley South Illustrative Map

- Agro-pastoral landscape
- Aesthetic appreciation
- Conservation



1. Ashness Farm (owned by National Trust)
2. Seathwaite Farm (owned by National Trust)
3. Croft Farm (owned by National Trust)
4. Goldscope Mine (owned by National Trust)
5. Seathwaite Wad Mine (owned by National Trust)
6. Greta Hall (owned by National Trust)
7. Derwent Isle (owned by National Trust)
8. Barrow House (owned by National Trust)
9. Lodore Falls (owned by National Trust)
10. Jaws of Borrowdale (owned by National Trust)
11. Friar's Crag (owned by National Trust)
12. Watendlath (owned by National Trust)

EXAMPLES OF KEY ATTRIBUTES: As shown on the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite South Valley illustrative map



NO. 1 FIGURE 2.c.9.16 Ashness Farm (owned by National Trust)



NO. 2 FIGURE 2.c.9.17 Seathwaite Farm (owned by National Trust)



NO. 3 FIGURE 2.c.9.18 Croft Farm (owned by National Trust)



NO. 4 FIGURE 2.c.9.19 Goldscope Mine (owned by National Trust)



NO. 5 FIGURE 2.c.9.20 Seathwaite Wad Mine (owned by National Trust)



NO. 6 FIGURE 2.c.9.21 Greta Hall

NO. 7 FIGURE 2.c.9.22 Derwent Isle (owned by National Trust)



NO. 8 FIGURE 2.c.9.23 Barrow House



NO. 9 FIGURE 2.c.9.24 Lodore Falls



NO. 10 FIGURE 2.c.9.25 Jaws of Borrowdale



NO. 11 FIGURE 2.c.9.26 Friars Crag (owned by National Trust)



NO. 12 FIGURE 2.c.9.27 Watendlath (owned by National Trust)

The varied underlying geology guarantees diversity in the landscape and this is intensified by human activity. In the fells the scars of once prosperous mineral mines are found and the alluvial soils of the valley floor produce a lush, flat, green carpet of pastoral fields and a strong pattern of boundary walls. Significant sites of nationally rare upland hay meadows are found in the Borrowdale Valley, an important remnant of past land management and local farming heritage. Above the valley floor and the semi-improved grazing of the 'intakes' on the lower slopes, the fellsides are cloaked in native oak woodland with Borrowdale being one of the most wooded of all the English Lake District valleys. These oak woodlands are of international importance and contain many species rare in England and restricted to this site. Borrowdale is a valley of two parts. South of Derwent Water and the so-called 'Jaws of Borrowdale' the valley is relatively narrow with a strong sense of containment provided by the enclosing steep, rugged fells and with pastoral farming as the over-riding influence on land use and landscape character. There is a perceived 'naturalness' about the landscape. North of the 'Jaws' the valley widens and is dominated by the expanse of Derwent Water with the market town of Keswick on its northern shore.

North of Derwent Water and Keswick the valley becomes still wider while retaining its sense of containment due to the steepness and height of the enclosing fells. The floor of the valley is the wide, flat alluvial plain between Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite Lake with the gently meandering River Derwent connecting them. The flat valley plain provides spectacular views of the surrounding fells. To the north west of Bassenthwaite the valley becomes a transitional landscape varying between intimate pastoral patterns of small fields to rolling hills with long distance views. It then enters the 'ring' of limestone surrounding the Lake District with pavements and outcrops that typifies limestone scenery. To the north east of Keswick and Bassenthwaite Lake, the massive circular area of high ground to the north of Skiddaw comprise the Caldbeck Fells and forms a physically discreet block of land devoid of trees, but covered in grass and heather.

The agricultural field patterns vary throughout the valley reflecting their different histories. In the small Watendlath valley, small early intakes on the fellside are apparent, but the larger more regular enclosures of Borrowdale are probably 18th century in date and therefore relatively late. Although some of the early field patterns around Bassenthwaite have now been obscured by forestry plantation, the present field system surrounding the village of Bassenthwaite displays the characteristics of an enclosed former town field. There are also traces of single ancient farms and extensive areas of parkland around Mirehouse at the southern end of Bassenthwaite Lake and Armathwaite Hall at the northern end.

The influence of the 18th century Picturesque Movement is evident in the landscape as the resulting influx of tourists and wealthy industrialists from outside the area created a fascinating and visually appealing blend of agricultural and designed landscape. The influence is particularly clear in the distribution of large villas, country houses and designed gardens and parklands.

Today there are still 103 farms with fell-going flocks in the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley area, and the Swaledale Sheep Breeders' Association has 23 registered flocks in the valley. There are nine National Trust landlord flocks as well as Herdwick Fairs, Tup Shows, Shepherds' Meets and Agricultural Shows in the valley. Around one third of the total area and most of the open fell is Registered Common Land. Borrowdale is a great stronghold

of the Herdwick sheep breed of which there are 21 registered flocks and there are many important farms in the valley. Two families still farm today that were referred to in the 1920 Herdwick flock book, while the Grave family at Low Skelgill, Newlands, have been farming there since 1347.

The walls and farm buildings in Borrowdale are constructed from local slate and the valley has numerous fine examples of Lake District vernacular style. Important groups of 17th century vernacular buildings can be seen at Grange, Watendlath and Rosthwaite. The settlement pattern in Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite has a range of small villages and hamlets and the market town of Keswick at the northern end of Derwent Water.

Keswick's present form and character reflects three main periods of growth from medieval market town, with its fossilised burgage plot pattern of parallel yards, to 18th century water-powered industrial town based on minerals mined in the surrounding fells, to the railway-induced Victorian tourist resort. The town sits comfortably in the landscape nestling by the lake with its picturesque islands within an amphitheatre of fells. The town has strong literary and cultural associations with Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth and Ruskin, who were all influential in attracting the first visitors to the area.



FIGURE 2.c.9.28 Farms and fields in the side valley of Stonethwaite

Blindcrake village, northwest of Bassenthwaite Lake is a unique linear settlement with a string of traditional rendered and lime-washed farmhouses and stone barns lining the village street. Stretching back from the individual farms, the fossilised medieval field strip pattern, later enclosed with hedges and a few stone walls, is undoubtedly the finest example of its type in the Lake District.

Caldbeck is a small historic hamlet with attractive architectural and historic character consisting of 17 to 19th century barns and 18th and 19th century buildings that use

local pale pink, purple or buff sandstones for walling and door/window surrounds. It is principally built on the southern bank of the river, where the medieval church (one of the finest in the Lake District), the rectory and tithe barn are located. The large churchyard has some notable 18th century headstones, including that of the celebrated huntsman, John Peel. Numerous barns dating from the 17th to 19th centuries testify to the agricultural origins of Caldbeck. It also has an unusually high number of water-powered mills from its industrial phase of development.

Hesket Newmarket was formally laid out as a neat small market centre, around village greens, with well-proportioned 18th and 19th century houses in local sandstone and render. It has numerous buildings protected by listing dating mainly from the late 17th to early 19th centuries.



FIGURE 2.c.9.29 Dated lintel over front door of High Side Farm, Bassenthwaite

There is considerable evidence of past industries which left their mark on the landscapes from at least the 16th century, exploiting the geological resources of copper, iron, tungsten, lead, arsenic, slate, barytes, zinc and graphite. The graphite is unique to this area and there is evidence that Flemish traders were supplying the Michelangelo School of Art in Italy with Cumberland graphite by about 1580. These industries were supported by woodland industries to provide fuel, leading to an expansion of coppice woodland. The woollen industry flourished in the medieval period with mills around the Keswick area. The area was also a bobbin manufacturing centre providing bobbins for the cotton industry in Lancashire in the 19th century.

The earliest evidence for settlement in the area dates from about 4,000 BC and there is some evidence of Neolithic axe production in the area. Clearance cairnfields at Weasel Hill could also be evidence of prehistoric farming. There was a Roman military presence in the area at Caermote and Troutbeck and a marching camp has recently been found near the well-known stone circle at Castlerigg. The place-names in Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite indicate an early British presence (the name 'Derwent' has a British meaning 'abounding in oaks'), but those of Scandinavian origin appear to dominate, which suggests that Scandinavian settlement in the valley was extensive.

From 1209 the area was divided between Fountains Abbey and Furness Abbey. Furness Abbey had a huge influence on the 13th century economy of Keswick and Borrowdale through its purchase of lands into which the Cistercian monks introduced large flocks of sheep, establishing a trade in wool. References in 1396 to 'our granges' in Borrowdale indicate the extent of their presence on the farming landscape. Fountains Abbey was also a major landowner and by 1418 it owned half of Borrowdale; where it had established a 13th century grange at Watendlath and a vaccary is recorded at

Stonethwaite. In 1418 a survey for Fountains Abbey stated that there were 41 farms each with an average of three acres of enclosed land.

Farming also had its origins in seasonal transhumant patterns and evidence of shielings survive predominantly within Langstrath. Some of the later permanent farmsteads (e.g. Seatoller) may have had transhumant origins. The 16th century saw extensive and enthusiastic enclosure of the fellsides and the creation of new farms. While new farms were created before the Dissolution, the disposal of former monastic land created many additional opportunities and it is likely that settlements such as Stair, Ullock, Snittlegarth and Seatoller are all 16th century in origin. This was also a period of growing industrialisation with the creation of the Company of Mines Royal in 1537 and the successes of the 'wad' (graphite) mines of Seathwaite.



FIGURE 2.c.9.30 Derwent Isle with Pocklington's villa, and Keswick in the distance

In the late 18th century Keswick began to develop as a tourist centre for the visitors who were interested in the contemplation of lake and mountain scenery attracted by guide books such as that written by Thomas West and poems written about the Vale of Keswick such as those by John Brown and Thomas Gray. Thomas West's guidebook of 1778 identified a series of viewing stations around Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite from which the picturesque beauty of the landscape

could be fully appreciated. West's tour around Derwent Water started at Keswick and worked in a clockwise direction to include 8 viewing stations. Additional viewing stations were proposed by the 18th century entrepreneur Peter Crosthwaite and are depicted on maps that he produced to sell to visitors. These viewing stations are still accessible and are mostly now in the ownership of the National Trust.

Early tourism in the Keswick area in the 1780s had two key champions in Joseph Pocklington and Peter Crosthwaite. Between them they organised a number of events and attractions including a museum and paid guides to encourage tourism. By the later 18th century, visitor numbers increased and accommodation had to be provided and it has been claimed that the first 'hotel' in the area specifically built to accommodate tourists was at Ouse Bridge at the north end of Bassenthwaite Lake, dating from the 1760s. By 1802, Coleridge noted that Keswick swarmed with tourists for one third of the year. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, the Wordsworths and the Shelleys all lived or owned land around Keswick in the early 1800s and all found inspiration for their literary endeavours from the landscape which features in their work.

The early Picturesque interest in Derwentwater quickly led to building of villas and creation of designed landscapes in order to enhance the beauty of the landscape. Some of the earliest villas were constructed by Joseph Pocklington, the son of a Nottinghamshire banker, who bought Derwent Isle in 1778 on which he built a mansion and various follies. The island and mansion are now owned by the National Trust. Pocklington built further villas at Derwent Bank, Portinscale and at Barrow House on

the east side of the lake where he also created a waterfall as part of the Picturesque attraction of the property.

A rather larger Picturesque landscaping and building scheme was undertaken by Lord William Gordon on the west side of Derwentwater. Between 1781 and 1785 Gordon purchased all the land from Fawe Park to Manesty and built houses at Derwent Bay and Silver Hill. The landscaping work included diversion of the road from Portinscale to Borrowdale, the laying out of gravelled drives and footpaths and replanting of areas of former coppice woodland with a mix of native and non-native tree species. The heavily wooded western shore of Derwentwater still bears testimony to Gordon's landscaping activities in the late 18th century and the southern part of his estate – Manesty and Brandlehow Parks – are owned by the National Trust.

With the influx of visitors, the area was under pressure to change. As a result Borrowdale has a particularly important place in the story of the early conservation movement in the English Lake District which continues to the present day. The felling of the Crow Park oaks by Greenwich Hospital in 1749-51 stimulated one of the earliest public debates about the aesthetics of economic land management decisions. Wordsworth's friendship with John Marshall (1765-1845) of Leeds had a significant impact on the ownership and management of the landscape. Marshall acquired the Greenwich Estate and the Wordsworths were instrumental in advising him on both the estate purchases and the landscape improvement, influencing his aesthetic and cultural values and sensibilities.



FIGURE 2.c.9.31 Church of Kentigern, Crosthwaite, Keswick. Canon Rawnsley was vicar here from 1883 until his retirement in 1917. He is buried in the churchyard close to the grave of Robert Southey.

Another early environmental battle that was fought and won in Borrowdale was the proposal in 1883 for the Buttermere and Braithwaite Railway from Buttermere to Keswick, primarily to carry slate from the Honister quarries. Canon Rawnsley, who was appointed vicar of Crosthwaite in the same year, was instrumental in organising letters to the national press, petitions and protest meetings and he soon defeated the Parliamentary Bill that had been tabled. He was also one of the three people behind the formation of

the National Trust in 1894 and the Trust's earliest land acquisitions in the Lake District were in this valley. The Lake District Defence Society was established in 1883 and other successful campaigns in the valley included the prevention of a proposed road over Sty Head Pass to link Keswick with Wasdale and the west coast. There were also legal battles over the public right to access footpaths from 1885 at Latrigg and these were to have beneficial long term consequences for the public.

The challenge of ensuring that change did not destroy what people had come to cherish continued into the 20th century. These battles resulted in the acceptance that electricity could be brought to remote places (such as Honister Quarry) underground rather than through overhead wires even if this was expensive but other battles to protect the area from modern road improvements of the A66 failed with what the Countryside Commission called 'a permanent monument to insensitivity towards superb scenery.'

QUALITIES

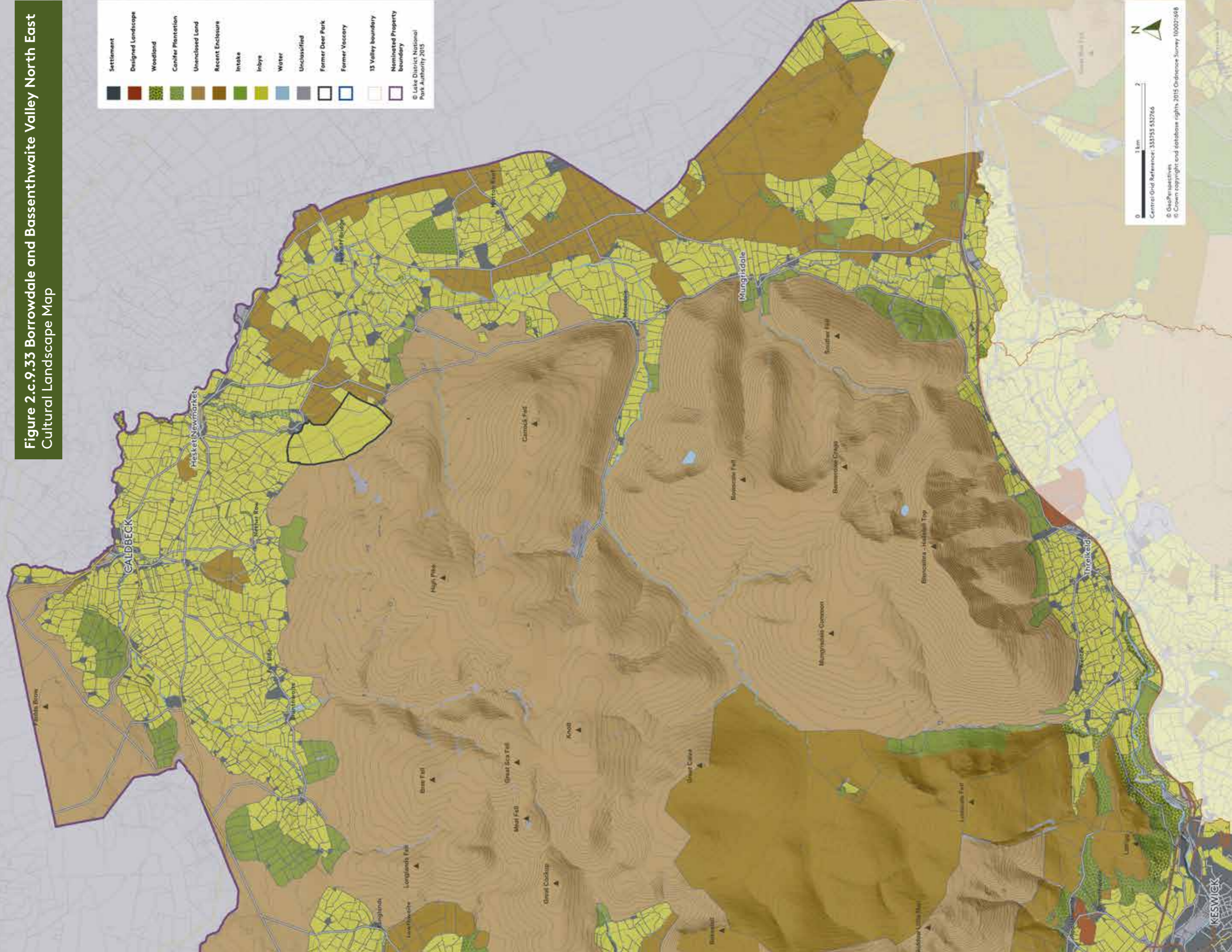
Attributes of agro-pastoral agriculture are strongly represented in the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley with a very clear landscape pattern of inbye and intake in the narrow side valleys of Seathwaite and Stonethwaite, and a field system at Watendlath which developed from two medieval ring garths. The areas of inbye land are more extensive in the more open parts of the valley and intakes less so, at the north west end of Bassenthwaite and north of the Caldbeck Fells. But all parts of the valley contain early farmhouses dating from the 17th and 19th centuries. Borrowdale contains several major Herdwick sheep farms while the northern part of the valley is a key area for the Swaledale breed.

The evidence for early land use is from the important Neolithic sites and finds of polished stone axes in the area. Roman occupation includes forts and marching camps. Place-names indicate extensive early medieval settlement including in the Norse period. The Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley is one of the most important areas of the Lake District for the landscape evidence of early industry. The Company of Mines Royal established a presence in Keswick in the late 16th century and significant early mines were developed in the Newlands valley and on the Caldbeck Fells, which feature a particularly complex and geologically important mineralisation. The unique graphite (wad) mine is located in Seathwaite and in the 19th century extensive slate quarries operated at the southern end of Borrowdale. The last mine in the Lake District to close in 1990 – Force Crag – is also located in the valley.



FIGURE 2.c.9.32 Woodland at King's How, Borrowdale

Figure 2.c.9.33 Borrowdale and Basenthwaite Valley North East Cultural Landscape Map

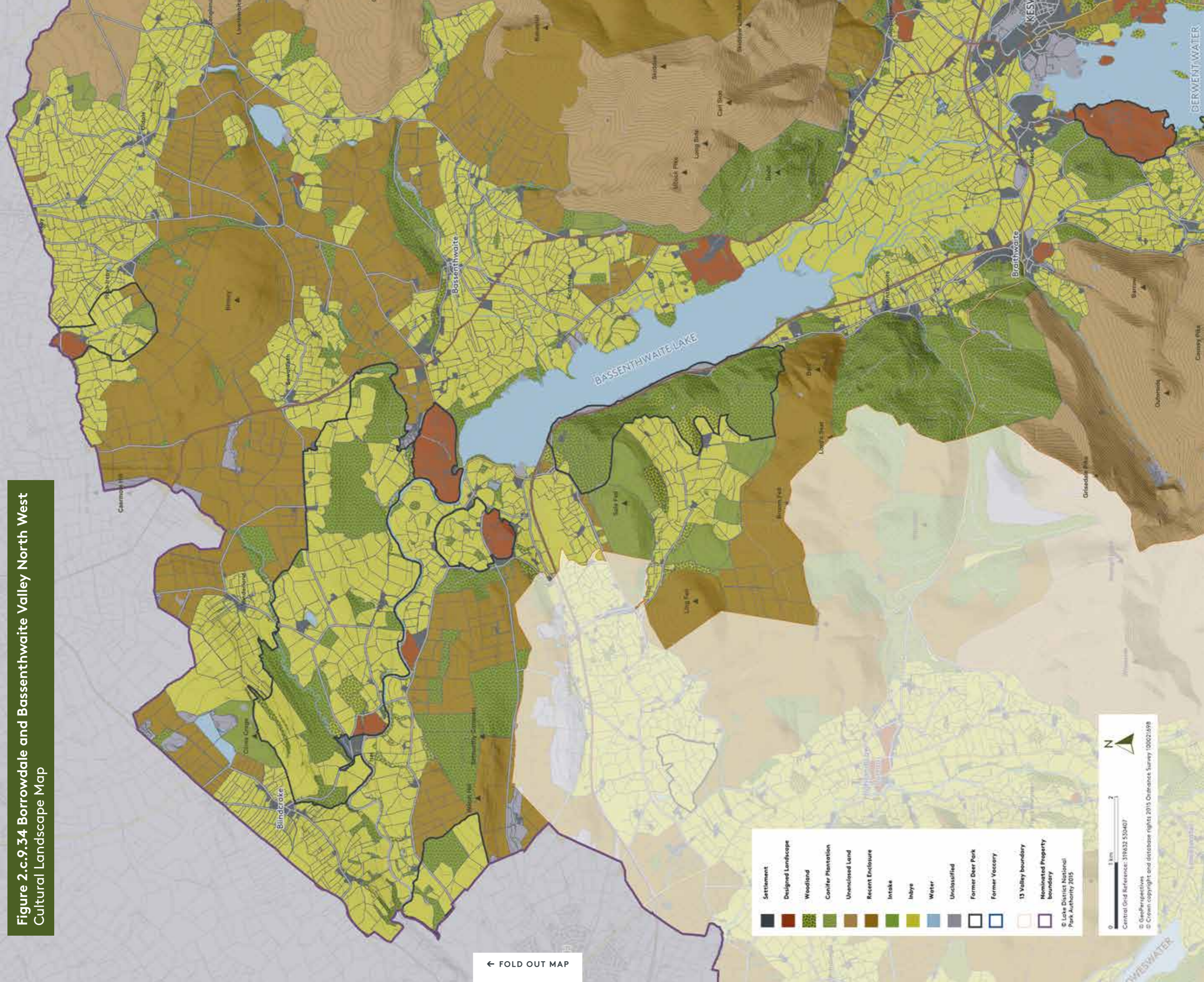


Settlement	Designed Landscape	Woodland	Conifer Plantation	Unclassified Land	Recent Enclosure	Intake	Inbye	Water	Unclassified	Former Deer Park	Former Vaccary	13 Valley boundary	Nominated Property boundary
(Dark Grey)	(Red)	(Green)	(Light Green)	(Yellow)	(Brown)	(Light Blue)	(Yellow-Green)	(Blue)	(Grey)	(White)	(White)	(Purple)	(Purple)

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0 1 km 2
 Central Grid Reference: 533153 53266
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Figure 2.c.9.34 Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley North West Cultural Landscape Map



← FOLD OUT MAP

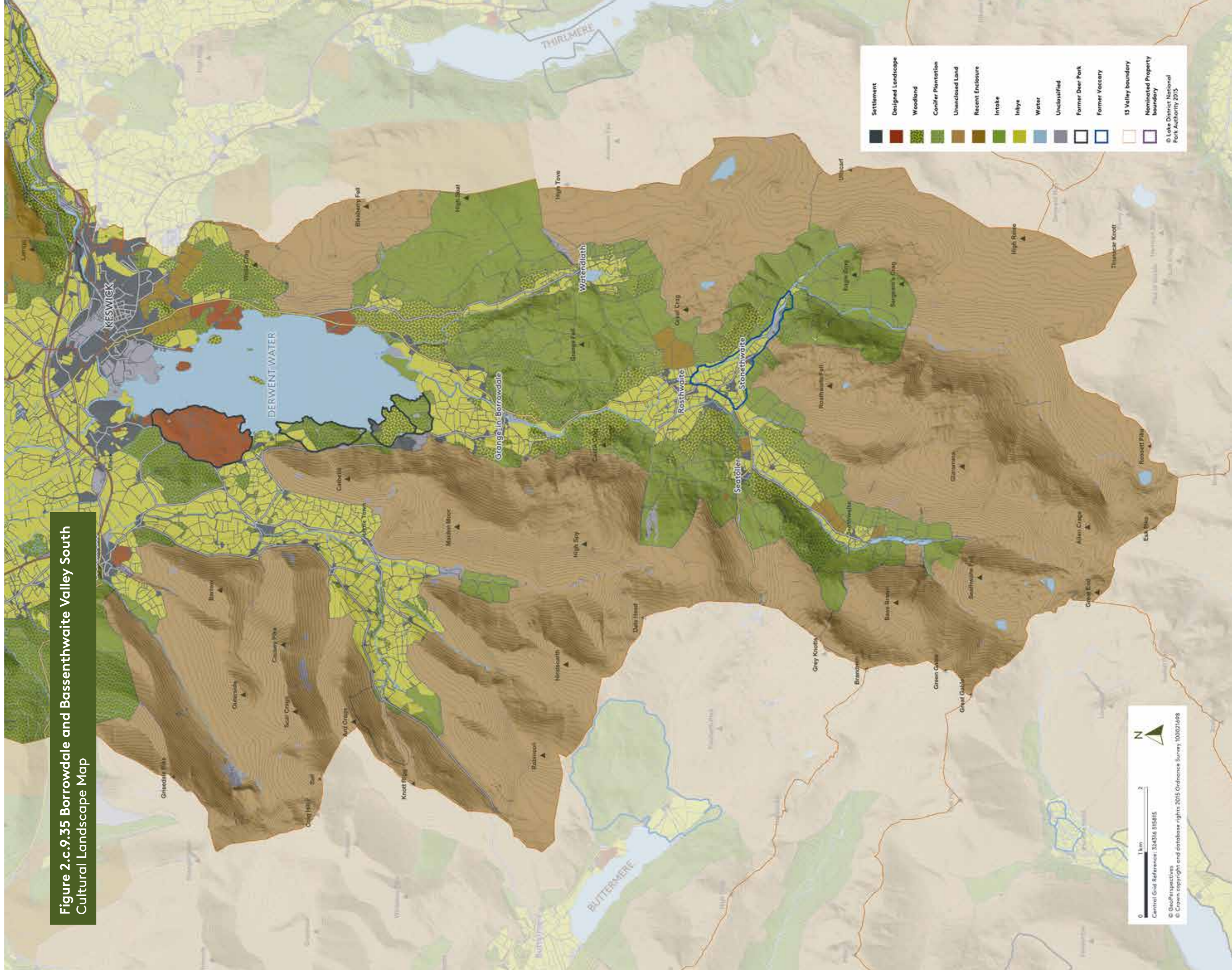
- Settlement
 - Designed Landscape
 - Woodland
 - Conifer Plantation
 - Unenclosed Land
 - Recent Enclosure
 - Intake
 - Inbye
 - Water
 - Unclassified
 - Former Deer Park
 - Former Veccery
 - 13 Valley boundary
 - Nominated Property boundary
- © Geoperspectives
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Central Grid Reference: 119632 530407

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Figure 2.c.9.35 Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley South Cultural Landscape Map



Settlement	Designed Landscape	Woodland	Conifer Plantation	Unenclosed Land	Recent Enclosure	Intake	Inbye	Water	Unclassified	Former Deer Park	Former Vaccary	15 Valley boundary	Nominated Property Boundary

0 1 km 2

Central Grid Reference: 324316 558315

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FIGURE 2.c.9.36 The contribution of the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley to the cultural landscape themes identified


























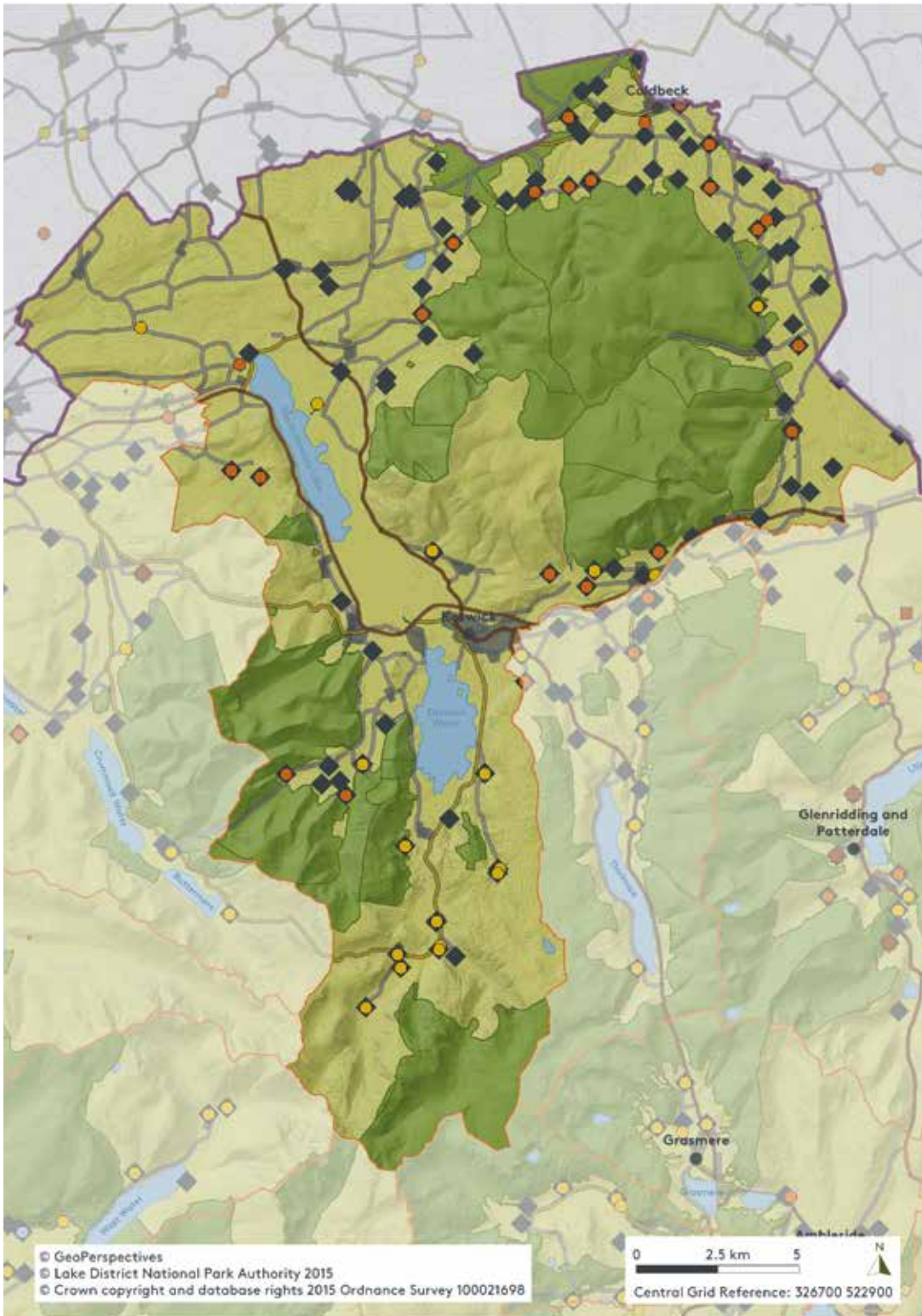
BORROWDALE AND BASSENTHWAITE		
THEME	COMPONENTS OF ATTRIBUTES	SIGNIFICANCE
Continuity of traditional agro-pastoralism and local industry in a spectacular mountain landscape	Extraordinary beauty and harmony	
	Evidence of pre-medieval settlement and agriculture	
	Distinctive early field system	
	Medieval buildings (e.g. churches, pele towers and early farmhouses)	
	16th/17th century farmhouses	
	Herdwick flocks	
	Rough Fell flocks	None
	Swaledale flocks	
	Common land	
	Shepherds' meets/shows and traditional sports	
	Woodland industries	
	Mining/Quarrying	
	Water-powered industry	
	Market towns	
	Discovery and appreciation of a rich cultural landscape	Viewing stations
Villas		
Designed landscape		
Early tourist infrastructure		
Residences and burial places of significant writers and poets		
Key literary associations with landscape		
Key artistic associations with landscape		
Key associations with climbing and the outdoor movement		
Opportunities for quiet enjoyment and spiritual refreshment		
Development of a model for protecting cultural landscape	Conservation movement	
	National Trust ownership (inalienable land)	
	National Trust covenanted land	
	Other Protective Trusts and ownership including National Park Authority	

FIGURE 2.c.9.37 Shepherds' flocks and native sheep breeds in the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley



- Nominated Property boundary
 Valley boundary
 Registered Common Land
- Fell-going Flocks
- Flocks registered with Breed Associations:**
- Herdwick
 Rough Fell
 Swaledale
 Multiple Breeds

Registered Common Land © Natural England 2015. Attribute data for Fell-going flocks: Lakeland Shepherds' Guide 2005. Attribute data for flocks: Herdwick Sheep Breeders Association 2014, Rough Fell and Swaledale Sheep Breeders' Associations 2013.

The key market town of Keswick was established in the medieval period and its early pattern of market place and burgage plots survives within the modern townscape. Smaller settlements such as Grange and Rosthwaite also have medieval origins while the large village of Caldbeck in the north has a particular character deriving from both agricultural and industrial activities.

The Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley is also one of the key areas for aesthetic inspiration. It was one of the primary areas of focus for early visitors to the Lake District from the mid-18th century and the area around Derwent Water, from Keswick to the 'Jaws' of Borrowdale, became celebrated nationally as a landscape of great sublime and Picturesque beauty. Villas and designed landscapes proliferated on the shores and islands of Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite Lake and Keswick developed accommodation and facilities for the increasing numbers of cultural tourists. The Valley was visited by numerous guidebook writers and artists and its landscapes and features were recorded in hundreds of watercolours and prints. The key Romantic poets Southey and Coleridge both took up residence at different times at Greta Hall in Keswick, while the poet Shelley also lived briefly in Keswick. The Wordsworths were frequent visitors to Keswick and Borrowdale features in many of William Wordsworth's poems.

The Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley is also highly important in demonstrating the attributes of the early conservation movement. This was where the very first concerns emerged over the preservation of the scenic qualities and beauty of the Lake District landscape, occasioned by the felling of mature oak trees on the northern shores of Derwentwater in the mid-18th century. This was followed in the later 18th and early 19th centuries by the purchase of key parts of Borrowdale by John Marshall and others keen to preserve the beauty of the area. Canon Rawnsley led the battle against a proposed railway on the west side of Derwent Water to the Honister slate quarries, and the National Trust, made its first purchases of land in the Lake District in this valley. Today the National Trust ownership is extensive (10,002 hectares of land owned of which 9,963 hectares is inalienable, and 292 hectares of covenanted land) and has been responsible for helping to maintain both the important agro-pastoral and picturesque aspects of the landscape.

As a functioning agro-pastoral landscape with extensive surviving evidence of aesthetic inspiration and a key importance for the early conservation movement, the Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite Valley demonstrates strongly the attributes for all three intertwining themes of Outstanding Universal Value of the English Lake District.